

NEWS RELEASE

COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT

TN.GOV/Education
FACEBOOK.COM/TennesseeEducation
TWITTER:@TNedu



Kelli Gauthier, director
Phone: (615) 532-7817
Kelli.Gauthier@tn.gov

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: June 26, 2014

Tennessee Lauded for Strong Partnerships Between Education and Economic Development, Hosts National Conference

NASHVILLE— Education and industry leaders from the nine-state Pathways to Prosperity Network gathered in Nashville today to discuss how to build academic pathways that establish clear connections between education and the workforce.

Tennessee has earned national recognition for forging critical relationships between education and economic development through Pathways Tennessee, the state's multi-agency initiative established in 2012, focused on providing rigorous education that leads to relevant careers. Pathways Tennessee currently has two pilot programs, one in the Upper Cumberland region and one in the Southeast.

In Southeast Tennessee, middle and high school students in Hamilton, Bradley, Marion, and McMinn counties are building skills in information technology and advanced manufacturing, preparing to make themselves attractive candidates for regional employers.

In the Upper Cumberland region, middle school students in Putnam, Jackson, Overton, and White counties worked through 10-day modules featuring careers that regional industries identified as emerging, such as advanced manufacturing, engineering, and health sciences.

"With programs like Pathways Tennessee, Drive to 55, and Tennessee Promise state leaders in Tennessee have set out a vision and the critical supports needed to implement and provide a 21st century education and training for all young people. Network states are eager to learn how such a bold strategy was developed and put in place," said Bob Schwartz, Professor Emeritus, Harvard Graduate School of Education and co-leader of the Pathways to Prosperity Network.

The Pathways to Prosperity Network is a collaboration between the Pathways to Prosperity Project at Harvard Graduate School of Education (HGSE), Jobs for the Future (JFF), and nine states: Tennessee, California, Georgia, Illinois, Massachusetts, Missouri, New York, North Carolina, and Ohio. The network is focused on ensuring that more young people complete high school and attain postsecondary degrees and certifications relevant to the labor market.

"By 2025, at least 55 percent of Tennesseans will need a certificate or degree beyond high school to get a job, and today only 32 percent have a post-secondary credential," Gov. Bill Haslam said. "Making education more relevant to today's marketplace is critical to our state attracting the jobs of the future, and initiatives like Pathways match the skills employers need to the education and training our students receive, helping us provide the workforce the job market demands."

Support for these regional undertakings comes from multiple state agencies including the Tennessee Departments of Economic and Community Development, Labor and Workforce Development, Tennessee Higher Education Commission, and many other statewide organizations. While Pathways Tennessee currently has two pilot regions, over the next two years this initiative will begin touching all corners of the state beginning with Southwest, Northwest, and East Tennessee regions in late 2014.

For more information contact Kelli Gauthier at (615) 532-7817 or Kelli.Gauthier@tn.gov.